LOUIS XVIII. AND CHARLES X.
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LOUIS XVIII. AND CHARLES X.

THE French physicians predicted as far back as May last, that if the weather was hot, the King could not get over the summer. His legs had been a mass of corruption; but in June, instead of acute, the pains became chronic, and he was in a state of continual lethargy. To give the appearance of his being much better in health than he was, he was prevailed on to take his drives as usual; but though he travelled over the pavement at the rate of twelve or fourteen miles an hour, the shaking had no effect on his lethargy, and it was very rarely that he uttered a syllable from leaving the chateau to returning to it. At intervals the sense of pain roused his dormant faculties, and he was capable of transacting business for a few minutes; but so impatient of contradiction was he, that he dismissed, without ceremony, even those to whom he had been longest attached,—the companions of his exile and his friends in adversity. Of this number were the Dukes de Blacas and La Chatre,—the former, for having presumed to offer an opinion differing from that of his Majesty on a very trifling point, was dismissed from service, and, to gild the pill of disgrace, appointed Ambassador to Naples; the latter, presuming on the very long intimacy, the affectionate attachment that had always subsisted between them, and the long and valuable services he had rendered his Majesty, conjured the King to abandon the project of the lowering the rate of interest of the public funds, as contrary to public opinion. The King made no answer; but on the Duke going the next morning to attend as First Gentleman of the Chamber, the Usher in waiting would not let him pass, and told him that his Majesty had no farther occasion for his services. The poor old Duke was thunderstruck; he retired to Meudon to pour out his sorrows in the bosom of his old friend the Duke de Castries; but the shock was too great for the consolation of friendship to heal the wound: as he was eating an egg at breakfast he fell down in an apoplectic fit, lingered a few days, and expired. On the King being told of it, he merely said, "He was a good man and a faithful servant."

The King treated M. de Chateaubriand in the same manner, and on the same account. At nine o'clock on Sunday morning, the minister was totally unacquainted with his fate; at eleven, on going to the Chateau, he was stopped, and told he would, on returning home, find the reason why he was not admitted.

These acts, so totally at variance with all our ideas of the forms of polished life, and especially of a Court which sacrifices more to exterior forms than any other, are only to be attributed to the extreme irritation occasioned by a state of continual bodily suffering.

About this time caries of the spine spread itself. The King was now obliged to be strapped in his chair; and it was evident that he could not suffer much longer. As the malcontents had long calculated on the royal demise for an insurrection, it was thought advisable to take every means of concealing the state of his Majesty's health; and for this purpose the censorship of the journals was revived, so that no intelligence of the kind could reach the Provinces. And as his decease was shortly anticipated, the genius of M. de Villele suggested the idea of making the principal changes necessarily consequent on a new reign, during the old one; so that when Charles X. came to the throne, there could be no discontents from dismissing one set of men to make place for others, and those in office would be grateful at keeping their places; while all the odium, if any, of the changes would rest with the old King, who had made them: hence the very numerous changes in the Council of State, the Prefects, &c. &c. &c. This was a deep stroke of policy in M. de Villele, which, it is believed, has secured him the entire confidence of Charles X.

The King's health gradually declined, yet it was thought good policy to

produce him as usual on State occasions, so that neither the regular receptions of his own Court nor of the foreign ministers were ever suspended. He even held his regular leveé on the 7th instant for the reception of the diplomatic corps. Although he was then in a dying state, he was strapped in his wheel chair to prevent his falling forward, his head sunk entirely on his breast, and his chin concealed in the blue riband of the Order of the Holy Ghost; his hat, fringed with white feathers, lying on his lap, and his hand upon it. For a few minutes he appeared to be asleep; at length he gave tokens of existence, and the Baron Lalive, conductor of the Ambassadors, named them according to the order in which they stood in the circle, and each advanced to salute his Majesty. At two or three of the first names the King muttered something, but unintelligibly; he then relapsed into the lethargic state, and the Ambassadors withdrew. At this leveé the Count d'Artois appeared in perfect health, vigorous and active, as if he were not above forty or fifty years of age.

It was now evident that the King could not survive many days; his florid complexion appeared to be owing to art, and the decay of nature seemed approaching the last crisis; the suppuration of the wounds became suspended; the animation of the lower extremities was gone; and the spark of life was only prolonged by a surgical operation to which he was very unwilling to submit.

His Majesty's attachments were few; and out of sight out of mind was rather a part of his character. M. de Cazes was a long time his favourite; he used to call him his Son; he could not pass a day without seeing him: but when the Duke de Berry was murdered, and De Cazes's enemies attributed it to his favouring the Liberaux too much, preposterous as the charge was, the King, on finding a loud outcry against his favourite, abandoned him. M. de Villele seemed latterly to possess his unbounded confidence; and on the marriage of the Minister's daughter, the King presented the bride with one hundred thousand francs. It is stated that, on his deathbed, he refused to see the children of the Duchess de Berry: it is known that the King was not fond of them, and this is attributed to circumstances almost too ridiculous to be related. On St. Louis's Day, in 1822, when the children were brought to him, he asked the little Princess to sit on his lap; she refused: on being asked by the Duchess (her mother) why she would not sit on the King's lap, she said she did not like it, because the King smelled. The other anecdote is equally frivolous as a motive of dislike: the King asked the little Duke of Bourdeaux, a few months since, if he would like to be a king? "No, Sir," was the reply.—"Why, my child, would you not like to be a king?"—"Because I like to run about." The boy fancying, from the only specimen he saw, that the inability to walk was one of the attributes of royalty.

The character of his Majesty, will, of course, be variously drawn—it may be summed up in a few words: He was neither cruel nor ambitious; all he wanted was peace and tranquillity; his long and painful state of suffering prevented his paying the attention to business that was requisite: equally inconstant in his likes and dislikes, he evidently possessed few or none of those higher affections which identify souls with each other; and it might be said of him as Goldsmith said of Garrick—

He threw off his friends as a huntsman his pack,
For he knew, when he pleased, he could whistle them back.

Charles X. on succeeding to the Throne, has promised to observe the charter and the institutions of the State, as his brother had done. This, certainly, is not promising much, for many and frequent were the infractions of the charter by Louis XVIII. Indeed, the charter, got up in a hurry, betrays all the haste and incompleteness of its origin: as an organic constitution, it is extremely imperfect; the *lacunæ* are numerous, and those attempted to be filled up have not been filled up in the most desirable manner. This is not to be attributed entirely to the want of liberality in Louis XVIII. but to the ceaseless efforts of the Buonapartists and

Republicans to sow dissensions, inspire distrust, create disturbances, and foment conspiracies. These were at length carried to such a height, that a general conspiracy to overturn the Government was organized throughout the kingdom; almost every regiment was corrupted: the conspiracies were detected on several points, but, notwithstanding they failed at Paris, at Befort, at Colmar, at Poictiers, and Rochfort, the spirit of the conspirators was unbroken when the insurrection in Spain broke out. As it had been found impossible to collect a considerable body of rebels on any single point in France, it was resolved to effect it in Spain, and thither all the discontented and revolutionary flocked from France, Belgium, England, and America: General Lefevre Desnouettes and General Lallemand came from America with this object; the former was drowned off the coast of Ireland, but Lallemand sailed from England to Spain, where Colonel Fabrier had organized a body of French refugees; Sir Robert Wilson and his Aide-de-Camp went to Spain to join them, and proclaimed himself the precursor of "ten thousand English, who would soon join them, to put down all *tyranny* and *tyrants*." The total failure of all attempts of the refugees to make a landing in France, or corrupt the invading French army, gave the death-blow to the hopes of the conspirators; and the result of the Spanish war destroyed entirely their sanguine expectations of effecting a revolution in France at the moment, or organizing it at the death of the King. But it was this well known threat and intention which induced M. de Villele and M. de Corbiere to take every precaution, when they found the King hastening to his final dissolution; hence the censorship, and the numerous changes of Prefects, Sub-prefects, Mayors, &c. through all the departments. We, who know France, firmly believe the precaution unnecessary: yet it was probably as well to convince the disaffected that every thing was foreseen.

From the conduct of the Count d'Artois, it was supposed he was strongly inclined to ultra-royalist principles and absolute power. This arose from the necessity which heirs apparent generally feel of forming a party, which must necessarily differ in political principle from that of the Court, or it would cease to be one. Now there were only two extremes to choose from, the liberals, or what is called the pure royalists. That the Count d'Artois should not prefer the party of the revolution, can be easily imagined; therefore he had no alternative but taking the other course, which was more consonant with his principles, his habits, and the position in which he was placed. But this may be said for the Count d'Artois, that he always disapproved of the excesses of his own party, and if he pardoned them, it was from a noble feeling—that of never forgetting the services of an old friend, and which induced him to forgive slight or temporary errors. In this point Charles X. differs widely from Louis XVIII.: his affections are strong, and constant as they are strong; he will make few political changes, save to recompense the zeal, fidelity, and constant friendship of the companions of his exile; and that he is no friend to absolute power, will be evident from the suppression of the censorship, which will be taken off almost immediately. His mind is not so cultivated by study as that of the late King; but whatever superiority Louis XVIII. had over him in that respect, it was more than counterbalanced by that habitual suffering, which paralysed the understanding and affected the judgment.

The King is healthy; he is in the full possession of all his faculties; he can see with his own eyes and judge for himself; and there is little doubt of France being happy and prosperous during his reign, for the rising spirit of rebellion is put down, and its elements dispersed.*

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* We give this interesting account as we have received it, knowing the ample means our Correspondent possesses of obtaining the best information, where he is not a personal observer. Where we might differ from him in opinion, we have refrained from urging our views, because we do not feel that we enjoy such good grounds whereon to form a judgment.